

ARCHES

MARIA LAURA RUGGIERO, Argentina

Maria Laura Ruggiero



"In returning to Berlin I seek the opportunity to bring to fruition my efforts from Berlinale Talent Campus 2004 and build upon the superb experience from its Script Station programme. I'm searching for co-production partners that will assist me in the production of a hopefully outstanding first feature: *Arches*."

Writer _____ Maria Laura Ruggiero
Director _____ Maria Laura Ruggiero
Producer _____ Agustin "Oso" Cavalieri & Verónica Baston, SeirenFilms, Argentina

Project Information

Format _____ HD
Running Time _____ 100 min
Genre _____ Drama
Target Audience _____ 20–35 years
Shooting Start _____ tba
Shooting Language _____ Spanish
Main Cast (confirmed, requested, favoured) _____ Alfredo Casero (r)
_____ Nazareno Casero (r)
_____ Xoana Pazco (r)

Budget _____ 800.000 €

Status _____ In development, 3rd draft
Screenplay supervised by Tom Schlesinger (Berlinale Talent Campus #2 Script Station)
Winner of the BAFILM/INCAA Contest for "Development of Cinematographic Projects"
_____ Mar del Plata Film Festival's Young Talents Programme – Production Clinic
_____ Declared of cultural interest in La Costa County

Representative's Profile

Since graduating from the University of Buenos Aires with a degree in Image and Sound Design, Maria Laura has pursued her love for film through several prestigious film programmes. In 2003, she won the BAFILM Award in Screenwriting granted by BAFILM-INCAA for her project *Arches*. She was selected for the Berlinale Talent Campus #2 as a writer/director, where she received mentoring by renowned script doctor Tom Schlesinger. At the Talent Campus, she also developed *Surfing Favela* which went on to win the The Fuel Experiment contest sponsored by Fuel TV and Fox Entertainment and now airs worldwide on NATGEO. Maria Laura received national attention from the National Board of Culture of Argentina for Outstanding Achievement in Audio-visual Arts, awarding her the Young Creators Prize. Subsequently her screenplay *Arches* was selected for the Festival Internacional de Mar del Plata Production Clinic. She has participated in several film programmes all over the world (Annual Scholarship Cannes: Master Course on Producing, Scholarships by UCLA and Film Arts Foundation), gaining an international perspective on the film business. In 2007, she won the NATPE/Fox Diversity Fellowship, the only Latin American fellow selected. Maria Laura is now working on directing her first feature while writing and producing for film and television. She is the head of SEIRENFILMS, a company devoted to content design for film, TV and animation.

Maria Laura Ruggiero SeirenFilms

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Dora, the 19-year-old daughter of a serial single mom, seeks to figure out how to be a woman in a small town in Argentina, where just growing up and becoming an adult is considered “a serious change of plans”.

Synopsis

Nineteen-year-old Dora lives near a small coastal town surrounded by the cold beaches of southern Argentina. She works selling pullovers by day and as a children’s entertainer in a ‘fun-bus’ by night. Abandoned by her father at a young age, Dora has nearly forgotten his face. Her only memory of him is a seashell and a photo taken by the beach. Struggling to leave her smothering adolescence behind and pursue her own identity, Dora decides to search for her father. Dora’s mother attempts to discredit her search, however, as she feels betrayed. Her best friends childishly suggest that Dora should cry over an imaginary father to move past her grief: “Go pick any grave, pretend there lies your father and just move on”.

And so she rejects the schemes of her ridiculous adolescent life. Realising her father is never going to return, Dora travels to Punta Rasa, a place where the ocean and the river meet. Locals call it the “Cemetery of Snails” because of the strange currents that bring hundreds of seashells to the shore. She decides to bury the sole relic which unites her with her long lost father – the treasured seashell from her childhood.

Will she be able to start over and break away from this twisted fairytale town?

Director’s Note

Arches is a small movie about a small town and the urgent need to grow up. *Arches* is not a location movie. *Arches* is its own landscape, its endless skies, its windy ocean. There is something about “La Costa County” beaches that makes them particularly unforgettable.

Souvenirs shaped as seahorses that change their colour with the weather, statues of seals and dolphins as great heroes of a luckless town. Why are seashells cemented to the sidewalks? Was it necessary to extend the ocean a little bit more to the city? Why do kids have their names stamped with heavy iron onto their t-shirts as a memory of having been some place?

Time passes slowly in this small coastal town. You live by the seasons, you die every winter.

Growing up in the city of Arcos is never quick and it’s the small events that count. Tiny gestures and a deep nostalgic view of life seem ingrained in a subverted reality. Yet a moment comes where everything must change, a place where the river must run into the sea. This is where it all ends and true living begins. This magical quest for growth is *Arches*, a personal journey, a polaroid of days forever lost, portraying the precise moment when our innocent vision of the world is lost and the bittersweet reality that we are children no longer makes itself known.

Since the very beginning, *Arches* has received constant support. The screenplay’s first treatment won a National Screenwriting Award, the first draft was selected for the Script Station of the Berlinale Talent Campus, and the third draft was selected for the Mar del Plata Film Festival’s Production Clinic with great success. Meanwhile, those involved in the project have blossomed from kids right out of college to filmmakers with movies showing on NatGeo worldwide.

As a writer-director, working on *Arches* is still a daring adventure, a call to stand on the shoulder of giants, to learn the ropes of this beautiful craft.